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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 004777

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ECON](#) [PINR](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: IRAQI KURDISTAN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SPEAKER ADNAN  
MUFTI CONDEMNS ISG REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

Classified By: RRT Leader James Yellin, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

This is a Regional Reconstruction Team cable

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: In a meeting with Regional Coordinator and RRT Poloff, the Speaker of the Iraqi Kurdistan National Assembly Adnan Mufti criticized the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group, alleged that the State Department does not take into account Kurdish needs, and said the Kurds have to right to independence although it is not presently possible. The Regional Coordinator expressed continued U.S. support for a united Iraq and for harmony between the regional and national constitutions and hydrocarbon laws. END SUMMARY.

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THE IRAQ STUDY GROUP AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT  
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¶2. (SBU) Regional Coordinator and RRT Poloff met with Adnan Mufti (PUK), Speaker of the Iraqi Kurdistan National Assembly (KNA) in his office in Erbil on December 19. Mufti began by saying that the expression the &Kurds have no friends but the mountains8 should now include &and the Americans.8

¶3. (C) That said, Mufti launched into a monologue on what he called the misguided recommendations of the Iraq Study Group (ISG). Mufti said that the members of the ISG were delinquent in not visiting the Kurdistan Region, and that the ISG recommendations came &from Turkey and Syria8 and would complicate Kurdish relations with neighboring countries. Additionally, he said the recommendation that the referendum on Kirkuk be delayed is unconstitutional. Regional Coordinator replied that the ISG report is unofficial and only one source of recommendations for President Bush. Mufti agreed, and noted that Kurdistan Region President Massoud Barzani had expressed his concerns about the report to President Bush on the phone. However, Mufti said, the Kurdish people are afraid implementation of the recommendations would lead to a return to the &old Iraq8 of Saddam Hussein.

¶4. (C) Mufti also asserted that the policy of the U.S. Department of State is controlled by Turkey and the Arab states and does not respond to Kurdish needs. Regional Coordinator replied that he is from the State Department and that this assertion is untrue.

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CONSTITUTIONS AND HYRDOCARBON LAWS  
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¶5. (C) Responding to a question by the Regional Coordinator on the status of the draft constitution for the Iraqi Kurdistan Region, Mufti said that the constitutional committee of the KNA has prolonged the public comment period until April 1, 2007. Two to three months after this period the KNA will begin to consider the draft constitution, but,

he said, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) has not yet decided whether to submit the draft constitution to a popular referendum or to a vote by the KNA. Regional Coordinator said the Kurdistan Region constitution should be consistent with the national constitution of Iraq. Mufti agreed.

¶16. (C) Regional Coordinator added that the planned Kurdistan hydrocarbon law should be in harmony with the planned national law. Mufti replied that the KRG and federal government have agreed on a formula for sharing revenue but the subject of contracting and exploitation of new fields is still under debate.

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NATIONAL RECONCILIATION AND UNITY  
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¶17. (C) Mufti praised Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki,s December 15 proposals to allow more former Baath party members to have government jobs and to allow more former officers and soldiers to rejoin the army. Mufti warned, however, that members of Saddam,s secret police and senior military officers must be kept out of public positions.

¶18. (C) Mufti stated the Kurds have the right to independence although it is not presently possible. He added that the Kurds will take a chance on the &new Iraq,8 but if it fails to materialize, the Kurds will leave Iraq. Regional Coordinator stressed the need for Iraqi unity and for Kurdish aspirations to be achieved through dialogue with Baghdad and national reconciliation.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES AND COMMENT  
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¶9. (SBU) Mufti is a member of the Politburo of the PUK. Mufti was KRG Deputy Prime Minister before being appointed Speaker of the KNA in 2005. Mufti, from an old and influential family in Erbil, has barely survived two attempts on his life ) thallium poisoning by Saddam Hussein,s regime in 1987, and the PUK Erbil party headquarters bombing in February 2004.

¶10. (C) The KNA remains largely a rubber-stamp for legislation proposed by the KRG executive branch headed by KRG President Barzani. Mufti kept the previous KNA out of many political decisions during his tenure as Deputy Prime Minister, but he now wants to increase the authority of the legislature. The role of the KNA in forming, debating, and approving the regional constitution will help determine its clout within the KRG.

¶11. (C) Both PUK and KDP have expressed vehement opposition to aspects of the ISG report that they feel dismiss Kurdish suffering and national aspirations. The vehemence of their reaction is not fully explained by the substance of the ISG recommendations, but also reflects the Kurds, troubled history, including chemical attacks by Saddam, and the belief that this history is being ignored.

¶12. (C) In addition, there is widespread sympathy for Kurdish independence not only within both the KDP and PUK but also within the public at large, although party leaders recognize that this is not practical at the present time. The public sympathy for independence creates pressure on KRG leaders to show tangible deliverables from continued participation in a united Iraq.

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